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Prayers of Mothers Who Care reap fruits for schools

Ruth Salomons

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Two concerned mothers met together to pray for their teenagers facing a difficult school environment. After God answered their prayers in a positive way, the mothers continued to meet each week to pray for other children and for the school staff. Mothers of similar interest joined them or formed small groups of their own, and the Mothers Who Care (MWC) organization was born.

That was in 1984. Since then, MWC groups have spread to every province and territory in Canada. Now, 12 years later, 1570 MWC groups meet across Canada weekly during the school year to pray for the children and staff in 2,420 schools. Besides praying, these teams of mothers give encouragement to teachers and administrators in creative ways. From MWC groups in private, separate and public schools alike, reports trickle in about the changes God is working through prayer.



A Mothers Who Care group in Strathcona Christian Academy east of Edmonton.

God at work

Across Canada, mothers tell about what God is doing in the public schools. In Quebec in a public high school with an active MWC group, the Christian students have banded together to support each other, to pray and to witness to other students.

A team of mothers in Sas-

katchewan prayed about the anti-Christian content of their school's Christmas concert; the following Christmas the content of the program was definitely Christian. The mothers declare that God was at work here, for "not one of us told them to put the message of Christmas in."

From British Columbia a

mother writes that a public school teacher for whom the local MWC group had been praying came to the Lord. The teacher explains, "It was never because you pushed anything upon me, but because I envied what I saw in you women, and your peace."

MWC groups are active in Christian schools as well. According to Doreen Reid, a mother who organizes prayer groups in a large Christian school in Alberta, prayer simply takes a different direction in a Christian school than in a public school. Instead of praying for

the salvation of a teacher or a change in curriculum content, the mothers pray about a child with learning disabilities, the school's witness in the community, or wisdom for teachers at parent interviews. In a Christian school, one mother recalls how a student has become much better adjusted, and another mother tells how the elementary school principal has been sustained during stressful administrative changes.

Reverse blessing

Besides the results of prayer evident in children and staff, praying mothers from different kinds of schools across Canada assert that they themselves have been blessed by taking part in MWC. A mother from B.C. declares that "while we stand in the gap and pray for others, I often... marvel at how the Lord is changing me!"

As they thank God for how he has been moving in their schools, mothers experience growth in their faith and a strong sense of community. From a public school, a mother writes, "As moms we have gone from despairing over our children in the public school to confidence and trust that God is able to look after them there."

See **MOTHERS** page 2...

Black's takeover of Southam News draws opposite reactions from Christian experts

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Conrad Black's recent takeover bid of Southam News has drawn strong criticism from other



Conrad Black

newspapers, mainly because it will put a majority of Canada's daily newspapers under the control of Black's Hollinger company.

David Long, a sociology professor at Edmonton's King's University College, criticizes the takeover, but Lloyd Mackey, a Langley, B.C.-based journalism instructor and founding editor of *Christian Info News* is more positive about it.

Long is mainly concerned about two issues: "the control over a very large newspaper chain reflecting one perspective" and "the economics of it, in terms of monopoly."

Long says, "We in Canada

have constructed this economic system. You can't really fault the guy for taking control." But on the other hand, he adds, "the government should have put controls on it."

Long is especially concerned that the newspaper medium is being monopolized because it plays a "vital role" in our society.

Power and uniformity

Long suspects that Black's main motivation for taking over Southam was power, not money.

"I don't think he'll ever run for prime minister, but I think he wants more power than the

See **BLACK'S** page 2...

In this Issue

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How the REC has changed in 50 years p. 12

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News

MWC demonstrates God's love in tangible ways

... continued from page 1

A mother who works on the school board of a Christian school says that her prayer with the other mothers provides balance to her work. Carol Sherman, MWC co-ordinator for the



Prayer is a major focus of MWC

Edmonton area, explains, "My participation in MWC is an important way of expressing my dependence on God in the education of our children."

The mothers and grandmothers in a MWC group

usually meet once a week for a quiet hour in a home or a spare school room. After sharing new prayer requests and fresh answers to prayer, they talk to God about a variety of current school needs: teachers making out report cards, school bus safety on slippery roads, and good sportsmanship for the coming game.

The groups have no hidden agenda and do no lobbying. They do regularly give encouragement to the school staff — thank you notes, gifts of baking, flowers for the staff room, or food for teachers working overtime. These acts of kindness demonstrate God's love in a tangible way and balance the mothers' prayers with actions.

Unusual dedication

Those women who consistently take the time each week to pray together are motivated people. Focused on a common concern for their children and the school their children attend,

they believe together that God answers prayer.

Sometimes their dedication is expressed in unusual ways. In Ontario, for example, two mothers rise early to pray together from six to seven o'clock every morning before going to work. Barbara Epp, MWC director, states, "Those

who faithfully pray are captured by a vision of what God can do in their local school."

A broader vision is also perceptible in MWC — the vision of a prayer-cover for each private, separate and public school across Canada, each kindergarten, university, and home school. MWC envisions

the powerful impact that prayer groups can have in this decade on the education of Canada's children, who, in turn, will shape our communities in the next century. MWC believes that God is at work across the country today. He is using ordinary but committed women to make that vision a reality.

MWC prayer manual

From the Mothers Who Care (MWC) office in Vancouver a prayer manual is available which contains instructions on how to begin an MWC group. The manual contains basic guidelines for functioning efficiently and for relating effectively to the school staff. Also available are promotional posters which can be put in local churches, and an audiocassette explaining the vision of MWC.

For this material or for information on an MWC group in your area, phone Barbara Epp,

MWC Canadian director, at 1-800-563-1106. Or write: MWC, P.O. Box 300, Vancouver, BC V6C 2X3.

Mothers Who Care Statement of Purpose:

Mothers Who Care is an international network of mothers who care about their children and the schools they attend.

Mothers Who Care consists of small groups of Christian mothers whose primary objective is to provide prayer and moral support for children,

teachers and administrators.

The mothers believe in God's ability and willingness to help and to bless.

Mothers Who Care is committed to seeking resourceful ways to encourage and support the school administration and staff, as well as to communicate God's love to them as clearly as possible.

Mothers Who Care can be called upon in confidence at any time for emotional, spiritual or practical support.

Black's newspapers may cut staff

... continued from page 1

prime minister has." Black wants a "strong hand" in newspapers.

Uniformity of newspapers will be one result of the takeover, Long believes. "With the purchase of more of that chain, there will definitely be more of that practical uniformity."

He sees this as being "the key problem" of the takeover.

Long also expects Black's organization will cut staff at the newly acquired newspapers. Such "downsizing" is "a trend that's all through the economy," he says. "I really dislike the words 'downsizing' and 're-engineering.' Efficiency and

humanity don't always go together."

Asked what positive effects the takeover might have, Long replied, "I don't see this as a positive development at all. I think we need different voices."

Press independence may be affected

Long expects the takeover will also affect the independence of Canadian Press, which is a co-operative news service owned by more than 100 daily newspapers across Canada. "If you have fewer perspectives, it becomes even more uniform."

Long feels that Christians do not have a strong voice in Canada's secular newspapers. "If they do, it's not obvious." Christian viewpoints are limited to letters to editors expressing extreme opinions, Christian news writers who don't express their faith strongly and "once-a-week religion pages."

A love for newspapers

In contrast to Long, Mackey says Black has "more than a bottom-line interest in newspapers. The man loves newspapers." That, he suggests, is Black's



David Long

bleeding," says Mackey. "The politically correct answer would be that it's not fair.... The concentration of ownership is something that we should be careful about." But, he adds, one positive result of this can be the survival of newspapers that might otherwise go out of business. Another advantage of newspaper chains is the sharing of resources.

Commenting on possible job cuts to Southam newspapers, Mackey says, "I think Southam already had those plans."

Asked if Christians have a strong voice in Canada's secular newspapers, he replies, "Here and there, some individual Christians do [but] their colleagues in the newspapers can make that difficult for them."

Mackey expects that Black's organization will maintain and encourage Canadian Press.

main motive for taking control of Southam.

Mackey comments that Black has Roman Catholic sympathies. "Buried in him somewhere is a tenderness toward a Christian view of things."

As the new controlling power behind Southam News, Black has a right to have his opinions reflected in the papers, Mackey says, adding, "I think he believes in editorial freedom as much as anybody."

Ownership of a large group of newspapers can be "a mixed



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Calendar of
Events
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Politics/News



Don't throw the baby out with the bath water

David T. Koyzis

In recent years we Christians have become freshly aware of the biblical mandate to care for

the poor and to free the oppressed from the chains that keep them in bondage. This mandate is sometimes known as the "preferential option for the poor." We have also come to understand that such oppression is often rooted in systemic causes requiring more than mere charitable efforts administered on an individual basis. Rather it requires a holistic approach attacking the underlying conditions contributing to injustice.

This consciousness of our mutual responsibilities has come about, at least in part, through the influence of liberation theology, a school of thought originating some 30 years ago in Western Europe and Latin America. It claims to read the Scriptures through the eyes of the oppressed rather than from the vantage point of the powerful. Indeed, liberation theology has succeeded in opening our eyes to things previously overlooked in the Bible. For example, it has taught us that in developing our political theories and in making our public policies we must continually heed the voices of the oppressed. To ignore them is to be complicit in their continued oppression.

However, the mere act of hearing the oppressed does not in itself make for a coherent policy alternative. Nor can we afford to romanticize the oppressed and thereby suspend our capacity for discernment in listening to what they are saying to us. If we do so, we are likely to pursue policies that are not only ill-considered, but are subject to the distortions of various ideologies.

Creation structure vs. spiritual direction

The oppressed, in particular, tend to fall prey to a common error in assessing their own plight. In properly opposing the systemic conditions that have contributed to their situation, they are often tempted to reject the good with the bad, mostly by failing to distinguish between creational structure and spiritual direction. For example, exploited factory workers frequently repudiate not only liberal capitalism but the market itself. Spouses who have been victims of abusive relationships are inclined to dispense with the institution of marriage altogether. And victims of nationalism are prone to distrust any form of communal solidarity.

Yet normal life would hardly be possible without market exchange, marriage and community, which are integral parts of created human existence. Attempts to rid ourselves of these are certain to lead to other ideological distortions, giving rise to further oppressions and a repetition of the whole cycle. Efforts to abolish the market in several European countries led to the bureaucratic nightmare of the command economy and the deaths of scores of millions of people over 70 years. The repudiation of marriage in some quarters has produced a cultural climate conducive to fragmentation, loneliness and social instability. A rejection of communal solidarity has led a generation of Canadian leaders to pursue policies effectively pushing increasing numbers of Quebecois into the arms of the separatists.

Real justice requires discernment

Once again, simply heeding the cries of the oppressed will not necessarily make for just policies, particularly if it prompts us to try to discard the ordinary structures of human life that God has put in place for our good. In such cases, under the influence of ostensibly liberationist ideologies, the oppressed may do little more than to create the conditions for further oppression of others.

Justice ultimately requires spiritual discernment, an understanding of the limitations and possibilities of God's creation, and hard work in formulating carefully thought-out policy alternatives. Only in this way will the cries of the oppressed truly be heard and attended to.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. He recently expressed his support for the institution of marriage by entering into it himself.

C.C. congratulates David and Nancy (Calvert). Nancy has immigrated to Canada from Wheaton, Ill., and has accepted a position at Ontario Theological Seminary.

CLAC to merge two Ontario offices



CLAC's Henk de Zoete commences the sod-turning ceremony.

CC Staff

GRIMSBY, Ont. — The present Hamilton and St. Catharines offices of the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) will soon merge, meeting under one roof in Grimsby, Ont. On June 19 ground was broken for a new building, which will be ready by fall.

The new Grimsby office will be located next to the Queen Elizabeth Way, the only major highway connecting the Niagara area with Toronto. The new office will be the base of operations for union representatives and various support staff and will serve 2,500 area CLAC

members who work in 85 firms with whom CLAC has collective agreements.

The new building will also house the administration centre for CLAC's pension and health benefits, serving 8,500 CLAC members across Canada. The office will also feature conference rooms and training facilities where the union hopes to conduct courses in health and safety, skills upgrading and education.

CLAC's other offices are in Mississauga and Chatham, Ont., Calgary and Edmonton. CLAC has a nationwide full-time staff of 55.

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Editorials

Campolo speaks wise words on divorce and remarriage

Eight years ago, Tony Campolo, a well-known evangelical author and speaker, wrote a book called *20 Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch*. Among the hot potatoes he was willing to handle are AIDS, euthanasia, sexual starvation, career mothers and homosexuality.

The one I want to focus on in this editorial is divorce and remarriage. It seems to us that Campolo says some worthwhile things in his chapter entitled "Is It Ever OK for Divorced Christians to Remarry?"

According to Campolo, Christians, like secular society, have become too casual about accepting divorce. Whereas in the past people who had difficult marriages felt restrained by society to stay in their marriages and thus had an opportunity to make the best out of a bad situation, today our social milieu provides an easy escape from interpersonal tensions.

Every marriage hits a serious snag one time or another, at which time a married couple may

wonder if they have made a huge mistake. What's important is how people face that first moment of disillusionment. If they decide to *make their marriage work*, they will probably succeed, says Campolo. For that reason it's important that the church create a climate in which people expect marriages to work.

Until death do us part

Another belief that Campolo holds is that divorce is contagious. In fact, he warns married couples to be very careful about their relationship with those who have had a divorce and regard their divorce as "the smartest thing they have ever done." He sees no problem with those who view their divorce as a tragedy.

Campolo affirms the right of people to divorce "when there is overpowering evil that will continue as a result of staying in the marriage."

But a divorce should never end the responsibilities that marriage vows bring, such as caring for each other *until death do us part*, says Campolo. "For Christians, a marital breakup does not mean a divorce from loving concern and service."

Finally, Campolo deals with the question of remarriage. It is here that he experiences a lot of struggle when he is asked to perform a wedding ceremony for previously divorced people. He believes that church councils should be involved in the decision, and that each case needs to be examined and prayed about on its own merit.

"The failures and sins that led to the ending of the earlier marriages should be examined, and repentance, when in order, should be made.... There must be no hint of a 'taken-for-granted' attitude." Campolo struggles here because he holds two important beliefs in tension: that God is a God of second chances, and that people should uphold the principle of a lasting marriage.

We find Campolo's advice both caring and obedient. In fact, we believe that young persons who are either contemplating marriage or have just married need to be reassured that most of the marriages that have failed in our society did not need to fail. Surely, a 45 per cent failure rate of marriages in Canada says more about the failure of liberalism than it says about the failure of those instincts that first brought the couple together.

God made no mistake when he created us with the ability to choose a partner. Unless we are listening to the wrong messages of a hedonistic and superficial culture, we may trust the slow awakening of love and friendship in that wonderful relationship called romance. And we may also believe that when the first feelings of romantic passion decline, God has set aside other means for married people to make their relationship work: fidelity, commitment, care, sensitivity, communication, trust and, not to forget, prayer and community.

When it comes to marriage, there is faith, hope and love. Not the least of these is hope. **BW**

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Ottawa has no business telling parents what to do

A package produced by Health Canada for the occasion of National Family Week in October will include a document from a lobby group fighting corporal punishment, reports Reform MP Sharon Hayes. Hayes rightly sees this as a government-sanctioned intrusion into parental responsibility. "Attacking the issue of parental discipline is purely an ideological agenda," says Hayes in a news release.

It doesn't take a lot of imagination to see what the next step could be: parents hauled into court for spanking their children. That would be a totalitarian outcome: the state telling parents how to rear their children.

We think that the Reform Party has a much better approach to parental discipline. It recently passed a resolution supporting "the duty of parents to responsibly raise their children according to their own conscience and beliefs, and that no person, government or agency has a right to interfere with parents in the exercise of that duty, as long as measures of discipline do not constitute abuse or neglect." Exactly!

The problem is abuse, not corporal punishment. People have the right to abstain from corporal punishment if they believe they

can raise children responsibly without it. But since no evidence exists that there is a link between the appropriate use of corporal punishment and violence, parents should also have the right to use corporal punishment in a responsible way. In fact, we believe that there is a link between the violence prevalent in our society and the lack of discipline in families.

It's important that we know the difference between violence and legitimate force. Legitimate force is the reasonable application of physical power for good; violence is the unjust use of physical power to injure or damage. Violence is always wrong. "The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence he hates," sang David in Psalm 11.

But the use of legitimate and appropriate force is praised by God as a means of correcting children: "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death."

But the Liberal government is not interested in saving souls. It is too preoccupied with saving the autonomy of individuals and their bodies under the rubric of Health Canada. **BW**

Opinion

Letters



Katie Richards and her daughters

God and humanity above heritage

Katie Richards

Think about what your life would be like if you and your family awoke one morning and found that you were no longer of white European descent, but your skin color had changed to black.

Although this thought is a bit extreme, think about it. What affect would this have on you? Would the people you call "friends" still be your friends? Would the

worry about my children growing up in a nation that sees mostly in black and white. I have prayed since I was a little girl that bigotry and hatred would stop everywhere, but especially in the church. I grieve for my children, and all children, when they have been taught bigotry and hatred or have been exposed to bigotry and hatred simply because of their skin color. I have rejoiced when my children

I truly believe that Christ transcends all questions of race. The physical differences among the races are apparent, but the color of one's heart and soul is not quite so easily known.

employer you have still want you for an employee? Would your children have any friends if you were at a predominantly white school? Would you still be welcome at the church you attend?

If you are thinking of the effect answering No to these questions would have on you, then you might consider changing the things you can. The challenge is to make a difference.

I truly believe that Christ transcends all questions of race. The physical differences among the races are apparent, but the color of one's heart and soul is not quite so easily known. The content of one's character will never be known if risks are not taken. Both blacks and whites have become trapped into seeing color before character. If any country is ever to achieve true racial harmony, the church must start by examining its own attitudes and preconceptions.

I am an African-American woman. I

have encountered Christian children and adults more interested in the content of their character.

Reading in the book of Ecclesiastes has brought me to the same conclusion that Solomon reached: *Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of humankind.* For, if we truly loved God and kept his commandments there would be a sincere need to get to know the content of a person's character. Search that character, and when you can see love, honesty, kindness and patience, you will find that God and humanity come before heritage.

The decision relies on you and me. When we go to church on Sunday, let's make room in the pew for all who would enter seeking to know the peace we have found in God. When we leave, let us remember who we are in Christ. He died once for all.

Katie Richards lives in Midland, Texas.

How do other parents deal with sports 'politics'?

We have taken a special interest in your articles on Chris Reitsma, the young Christian pitcher (CC, June 14). We congratulate him and his family for beating the odds and being signed on by the Boston Red Sox. We're glad that, young as he is, he still acknowledges God as the giver of his abilities.

We, too, have a son with the very same dream. Although Sean is only 12, he has been pitching on a travel team for four seasons.

What we find so hard to deal with is the politics behind this sport and many others — the jealousy and back-stabbing that goes on, not so much with the

players themselves, but with the parents. What we are asking is: How do we as Christian parents deal with this? We know that giving this to God is the answer, and believe me, he's heard it all. Without that knowledge we would not have survived to this point!

What we are hoping for is that others in your readership will share their experiences and advice through this paper. We look forward to future issues through our subscription renewal.

Please keep us updated on Chris's career.

Wybe and Annette Zylstra
Sarnia, Ont.

We often mean so well

Enclosed please find my cheque for your paper for another year. I especially enjoy the editorials, and also Peter and Marja's column.

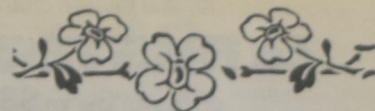
You wrote about speaking Dutch in church, and I wholeheartedly agree with you, even though I was born in the Netherlands also. It has no place in the church anymore!

Sometime ago in our area, a pastor friend of ours, preached a very nice sermon. Afterwards someone walked up to him and said: "For not being Dutch, you had a nice sermon." The response of this

minister with a Scottish (?) name was: "I am taking pills for that."

I thought you might enjoy reading it. We often mean so well, but it must sound strange to others.

John Cherdon
Grand Rapids, Mich.



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Environment

A national park by any name

The following was a June 4, 1996, editorial in the Pretoria News (South Africa).

The National Parks board is seeking a new corporate identity. At present, as chief executive Dr. Robbie Robertson has noted, South Africa's game parks are perceived as destinations for free-spending overseas visitors and local white middle-class tourists.

Dr. Robertson says it is "of the utmost importance that all South Africans accept co-ownership of our national parks as part of their national heritage," and he is right. But whether a name change will achieve this desir-

able objective is doubtful....

There was a time when white people ordered the lives of black people by way of a Department of Native Affairs; when the sound of it grew uncomfortable, the same bureaucracy turned into Bantu Administration; and when that too became politically incorrect it was re-born as Plural Relations, until eventually it was cloaked as Co-operation and Development; yet it remained a department of whites ordering the lives of blacks.

In the same way, to suddenly rename the National Parks board will not of itself change the perception — or the reality — that

[our parks] are primarily for foreigners and better-off South Africans. It goes far deeper than that: it goes to the cost of accommodating a family in a neat, four-bedded bungalow with facilities, the expense of getting from Soshanguve or Khayelitsha or KwaMashu to the parks, and so on.

It goes to the very fabric of our society and the inequalities that exist now and that will continue to exist for some time. Better than a name change, we believe, would be some creative thinking on how to bring the parks to the people.

Judge says U.S. Park Service can't accommodate Indian beliefs

CASPER, Wyo. (EP) — A U.S. National Park Service plan to ban climbing at Devils Tower in June to accommodate religious observances by American Indian groups has been overturned by a federal judge.

Judge William Downes said the plan amounts to government support of religion, violating the constitutional principle of separation of church and state.

Devils Tower, the 1,300 basalt column featured in the movie

"Close Encounters of the Third Kind," is a national monument and popular destination for rock climbers. It is also sacred ground for several Indian tribes, some of which hold religious services there in June.

To accommodate Indian beliefs, the park service tried to voluntarily respect Indian beliefs, but struck down rules prohibiting climbing during June. "Such regulations require climbers to conform their conduct in furtherance of those American Indians' religious necessities," he wrote. "This amounts to unpermissible government entanglement with religion."

Downes gave his support to efforts to encourage climbers to voluntarily respect Indian beliefs, but struck down rules prohibiting climbing during June. "Such regulations require climbers to conform their conduct in furtherance of those American Indians' religious necessities," he wrote. "This amounts to unpermissible government entanglement with religion."

Creation waits...



John Wood

Failing theories and suffering saints

Have you ever wondered what a failed theory looks like? I started thinking about it not long ago after young Jessica Dubroff was killed attempting to set a flying record. Her mother and father held a theory of life that elevated freedom to the highest level, eclipsing both responsibility and common sense.

This spring I was in Obninsk, a city just southwest of Moscow, where several theories have failed in the recent past. No tragedy is small when it happens to you, but some are more widespread and long-lasting than others. The dramatic failure of the theory behind the command and control economy of the former USSR is evident to all. The people of Russia and other former Soviet states are paying the price of that failure: enormous personal and environmental costs.

A looming failure

The shadow of another great failure of theory, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, is close by Obninsk. We were a few kilometres from one of the fallout zones which appeared a decade ago.

One night my host brought out pictures of his work "in the zone," as they say. There he was with three others standing in front of his gigantic truck, dust mask slung about his neck. The wall of the damaged reactor loomed above them in what seemed like any typical construction site. The twist was that we both knew that he now carries in his body radioactive isotopes and the effects of radiation. After an initial bout with hair loss, his health has remained good — so far.

Obninsk is a technical city that has specialized in developing nuclear technology. Many people from Obninsk have been "in the zone" to work because of their specialized training. Most of these people have received overdoses and fallen sick, and some have died. Nuclear power, we were told, is not risk free, but is a relatively safe energy source if used carefully. The problem is that we were not, and still are not, prepared to pay the full cost when an accident occurs. The failure of this theory will have consequences long after our grandchildren are dead.

A throw-away Gospel?

I went to Russia to consult with educators there on environmental education. It is a sobering place to think about our stewardship of the earth.

The Chernobyl disaster has been eclipsed by the economic transformation of this society. Six years ago there were active recycling programs for paper and metals. Today there are none. Aluminum cans go straight to the trash; there is no deposit, no return. The move to a market economy has embraced the worst of our throw-away mentality. Christians have an opportunity to help reshape a stewardship ethic for Russia.

I was introduced to environmental educators from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Everywhere I went there were Christians interested in this work. It is too bad that North American Christians have had so little to say to them about how to care for creation. Our emphasis on personal salvation has done little to bind up the environmental wounds of this society.

We haven't taught people much about giving a cup of water (that isn't contaminated). We seem to have been focused merely on a relatively narrow presentation of the Gospel that ignores stewardship. Perhaps it's time to rethink the theory that underlies our throw-away economy and to give it the biblical challenge it deserves. There are a number of Russian saints who would benefit from this reflection as much as we ourselves.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

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ARTS & MEDIA

Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored



Karen Malina White and Al Freeman Jr. as May and Elder, Cliff's grandparents

Marian Van Til

Rated PG. Stars Al Freeman Jr., Phylicia Rashad, Karen Malina White, Richard Roundtree. Written by Paul W. Cooper. Produced and directed by Tim Reid.

At first glance, white Canadians can be forgiven if they conclude that a movie with a title like this one has wouldn't hold their interest, or would have more to say to Americans. True, this is an autobiographical film which centres on a black boy who was born in the rural American South in 1946; but its themes are universal.

Among those themes are race relations, of course. But we also see the great importance of community, as illustrated both in the loving embrace of an extended family and the loving care of a church congregation committed to living its Christian faith.

It is the very segregation they experience which is the catalyst for the forming and maintaining of that community. In turn, the community shapes its members and builds the strength of character they will need to maintain dignity in the face of undignified and sometimes vicious treatment. These themes are powerfully presented, all the more so because the film is

quietly understated.

Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored is a look back, based on writer Clifton Taulbert's memoirs, and thus it is nostalgic: for childhood; for a loving and wise grandfather; for a strong aunt and other relatives; and for that sense of community which today is largely lost, except in the church.

But this film also makes you think hard about the present. "Colored" people may now be black or African-American (or Caribbean-Canadian), but there wasn't then and isn't now any question about the terrible sting of racism and the toll it takes on its victims. Yet see those effects not in dramatic lynchings and cross-burnings but mostly in more subtle behavior. The movie refuses to rely on expected plot devices and stereotypes (black or white), and it has no axe to grind.

It ends too soon

Cliff is the main character as a child and is the now-adult narrator of the story. His birth is the result of a teenaged love affair and it is agreed that his grandparents will raise him so that his mother can work. In an unusual scene, the grandfather, known as Elder, initially doesn't want to accept the baby because

Understated family film effectively shows the painful strictures of segregation

he doesn't want his daughter to get the idea that he accepts her "fornication." But he changes his mind once the child is in his arms; and he will become a shining example of Christian love, integrity and compassion to his grandson (and to his daughter). Later, an aunt continues that tradition after Cliff's grandmother dies and Elder becomes too feeble to care for him.

Another figure who strongly influences Cliff is a wealthy white woman for whom he does yard work as an adolescent. Just as his family has stressed the importance of education, she encourages him to read, and she makes her resources available to him. (She is the one significant character in the film who is not well enough developed.) She lends him classics from her own library and later checks the

books he wants out of the public library for him (blacks are not allowed to use the library).

The only real disappointment here is that the film ends too soon — just as Cliff, now in his late teens, is leaving to go North, presumably to continue his education. We've come to like this character and care what happens to him, and we want to know something about his future and his real-life counterpart. A written epilogue, at least, would have allowed that.

A winning ensemble

On the other hand, it's perhaps not that bad to be left wondering. We know that with the solid upbringing Cliff has had that he'll succeed in his endeavors; and we do know that Clifton Taulbert, upon whom Cliff is based, became a successful writer.

The acting here is uniformly good. Veteran actor Al Freeman Jr. brings a fundamental strength to Elder's essentially quiet character. And Phylicia Rashad (who was Bill Cosby's wife on Cosby's long-running TV show and who is a relative newcomer to movies) shows that she is very capable of nuanced acting. Director Tim Reid adeptly interplays these main roles, and the three young actors who play Cliff at different points in his life, with the huge ensemble (over 80 speaking parts) that makes up the rest of the cast.

This is family film at its best and most rare: it is simultaneously entertaining, educational, moving, thought-provoking and even funny quite frequently; not to mention being technically good and aesthetically satisfying.

U.S. federal judges shut down Communications Decency Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A new U.S. federal law prohibiting indecency on computer networks was struck down as unconstitutional June 12. A three-judge panel issued a preliminary injunction barring enforcement of sections of the Communications Decency Act which prohibit computer-based distribution to minors of material which is indecent or "patently offensive."

Provisions in the act relating to child pornography and obscenity — two forms of speech which are not constitutionally protected — were left intact.

The decision suggested that the Internet should be given broad freedom, like newspapers, not subjected to regulations on content like broadcasters.

"As the most participatory form of mass speech yet developed, the Internet deserves the highest protection from governmental intrusion," wrote U.S. District Judge Stewart Dalzell, a member of the panel. "Just as the strength of the Internet is chaos, so the strength of our liberty depends upon the chaos and cacophony of the unfettered speech the First Amend-

ment protects."

The decision also said the act would be burdensome, and determined that children were unlikely to inadvertently find pornography on the Internet.

President Bill Clinton, who signed the act, said he believes the law will ultimately be found constitutional. "I remain convinced that our Constitution allows us to help parents by enforcing this Act to prevent children from being exposed to objectionable material transmitted through computer networks," Clinton said.

Clinton also applauded the communications industry's efforts to rate Internet sites, and expressed support for "the development and widespread availability of products that allow both parents and schools to block objectionable materials from reaching computers that children use."

'A great victory' or 'an arrogant decision'

Billionaire software maker Bill Gates of Microsoft, which participated in the court challenge to the act, called the decision "a great victory for

anyone who cares about freedom of expression or the future of the Internet."

But the Family Research Council (FRC) called the ruling "an arrogant decision which flies in the face of the Supreme Court and our society." In a statement, the FRC aid, "We have long embraced the principle that those who peddle harmful material have the obligation to keep the material from children. On the Internet, the burden of protecting children from exploitation should not rest solely on parents."

Sen. Jim Exon (D-Neb.), who wrote the portions of the bill struck down by the judges, said, "The court has taken the ACLU line that anything goes on the Internet, even though that overlooks well-established laws protecting children from pornography in other areas." Exon added, "The Decency Act stands for the premise that it is wrong to provide pornography to children on computers just as it is wrong to do it on a street corner or anywhere else. Hopefully, reason and common sense will prevail in the Supreme Court."

Church

REC bits and pieces

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — At every denominational or ecumenical gathering there is always work done that doesn't get press coverage because it's not considered a "big deal." Nevertheless, the bodies in question would consider it important work. The following items fit that category and came out of the June 3-16 50th anniversary assembly of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (see other coverage in last week's CC and on this page, and a history of the REC in this issue, p. 12).

Kudos and contacts

* Long-time general secretary Dr. Paul Schrottenboer was publicly honored for his years of service from 1963 to 1988. The assembly also thanked him for his "many years of excellent service" in editing the *Theological Forum* (TF).

* To get a greater diversity of cultural perspectives, TF will appoint an African, Asian, North American and Latin American theologian from REC member

churches to assist current editor Piet Potgieter in soliciting articles from "knowledgeable and competent writers in their regions."

* The REC's Commission for Theological Education and Interchange (CTEI) will encourage member churches to organize regional conferences on topics of concern to the churches.

* An electronic bulletin board and e-mail system will be developed and implemented so that it can be used by REC study and research committees and by member churches for regional planning and for sharing ideas and reports.

* A volunteer will be appointed to maintain and keep current an REC page on the World Wide Web.

* REC will pursue contacts with the Seventh Day Adventists. When the 56th General Conference of the SDA was held last summer in Utrecht, the Netherlands, the REC was represented there by Interim Committee member Charles Jansz. Jansz

reported that the SDA church "has a very deep commitment to the Scripture and a massive international structure and organization to carry out its ministries. It has shown a strong emphasis on global mission and on economic development in areas where there are social problems." Jansz also reported that the SDA's "passionate hope for the Second Coming permeated their theology, teaching, preaching and singing during the general conference."

Dr. Bert Beach, ecumenical officer of the SDA's Interchurch Relations Council, brought greetings to this year's REC assembly on behalf of his church, saying an ongoing conversation between his church and the REC "would be helpful for both concerned."

* REC will continue contacts with other ecumenical bodies, "where considered appropriate." Those bodies include the World Council of Churches (WCC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).

REC wants more involvement from youth

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — One of the pre-assembly conference topics this year involved "preparing young people to confront the spirits of the age" — in home, in school, and even in the church. That meant interaction with young people was "built into the program."

But, in the words of the first

day's assembly minutes, the REC would like to "have more involved young leaders who are active in youth work and Christian education." It was noted that the nature of the conference-assembly "inclines the member churches to send their more experienced leaders. [But] younger leaders must be given opportunities for involvement ...

if the REC is to remain vital."

The REC has a standing Conference on Youth and Christian Education (CYCE) which was headed since 1980 by Rev. James Lont (also of the Young Calvinist Federation). Lont has now moved to a part-time REC staff position as secretary for Youth and Christian Education "in order to intensify REC's ef-

forts in this area of ministry."

REC will also try to help its member churches provide resources that will strengthen homes in their efforts to provide Christian nurture to their children, help churches "stimulate a more relevant ministry to their young people in their cultures (e.g., a contemporary catechism, encouraging active

participation in church), and encourage young Christians to serve as teachers and "affirm Christian teachers in all types of schools."

Member churches and their congregations were also urged to "influence governments for good" so that public policy will enhance "whatsoever things are true, honorable, just...."

GKN suspension controversy fizzles (for now)

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The controversy that was expected to erupt over a proposed "suspension clause" in the REC constitution didn't happen. That's because the matter will be studied further and then taken up at 2000 assembly.

The possible suspension clause came about because of dissatisfaction with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (GKN). Some member churches have already left the REC because it has not suspended the GKN for its unorthodoxy.

The suspension clause which was put on hold (drawn up by the Interim Committee) said suspension should be agreed upon by two-thirds of voting delegates; it must have been proposed by one or more churches after those churches had previously presented their concerns to the church in question; the REC should take a church at its word if it says it holds to the authority of Scripture, and should take no action "until the church has been given sufficient opportunity to defend itself."

Also needed to suspend would be an investigation of the charges by the Interim Committee. "Such action shall be taken only when the Council is convinced by adequate evidence that the member church's expressions of allegiance are not true to fact."

Some REC observers said it would be difficult to predict how the suspension issue will be handled in the future, and whether current REC members would eventually suspend or even oust the GKN. Though a number of member churches do not agree with the GKN on major issues, many seem willing to keep them within the fold at this point. The Dutch church's most vociferous critics have already left the REC.

Christian Coalition calls summit on church burnings

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A Christian Coalition plan to hold a pastor's summit on church burnings in the South was met with criticism by liberal black leaders. The Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, accused the Christian Coalition of "trying to exploit the situation."

Lowery expressed his unwillingness to co-operate with the conservative organization, and called it "incongruous to shed tears over burned churches if you're going to continue to embrace concepts and an agenda that is against the best interests of the people you want to help."

Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, acknowledged that, in a way, the Christian Coalition was trying to make up for earlier failures by white evangelicals. "There was a time in our nation's history when the white evangelical church was not only on the sidelines but on the wrong side of the most central struggle for social justice in this century," Reed said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Lowery softened his stance later, but only slightly. "We'd be glad to join with any members of the community of faith to fight injustice, to fight poverty," he said, adding, "But they're not

going to absolve themselves by exploiting these fires."

In response, Reed called Lowery's statements "irresponsible," and said, "When a community seeks repentance and reconciliation ... I think all people of faith ought to welcome that and not turn it away."

Reed admitted that in order to maintain its moral authority on other issues such as abortion, the Christian Coalition needs "to make racial reconciliation a major priority," he said.

The Christian Coalition says it will give \$25,000 to anyone with information leading to arrests and convictions in the church burning cases.



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The baptism of households

Andrew Kuyvenhoven

Last month I learned of another Reformed congregation where parents requested and received permission to have their child "dedicated" rather than baptized in the worship service. The parents asked for "dedication" because they think that baptism is appropriate only when a person can confess faith.

Perhaps we are heading for a time when baptism is administered to the children of parents who ask for it but the parents who think that only "believers" should be baptized can have their babies dedicated in church.

And already we might ask: Do people in Reformed churches understand what the difference is between having a child baptized and having him or her dedicated?

I regret this development, although it is true that the New Testament does not state explicitly that our children ought to be baptized. I have often wondered why the Lord did not place that matter beyond discussion. He could have easily done so.

We used to persecute and kill each other about the meaning of the Lord's Supper and the mode and time of baptism. But we should still care enough about truth and unity to have discussions with fellow Christians who believe in "believers' baptism only."

Ask the right question

We can have a fruitful discussion if we put the question correctly. The question is not whether babies can believe in Christ. They cannot. The question is not how an individual comes into a saving relationship with God. A person needs to repent, believe and be baptized. We don't disagree on that either. But the question that needs to be settled is: How does the New Testament regard the sons and daughters of believers? Are they in Christ? Or not in Christ?

No one can doubt that the children of the Old Covenant were included in the people of God. And the baby-boys were circumcised as a symbol of belonging to God's people. But when Paul wrote to the "saints," in Ephesus, he not only addressed wives and husbands (5:22), slaves and masters (6:5), but also children and parents (6:1-4). The children must obey their parents "in the Lord," he said, which is the state of grace and newness where all Christian activity takes place.

All live under the sign of the cross

What did Paul and Silas answer when the jailer in Philippi cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household" (Acts 16:30,31). Why did he say "you and your household"? Did he know the jailer, his wife and the ages of their children? Not likely. But the terms "you and your household" or "you and your children" came easily across the lips of the New Testament preachers. It's the phrase used by God when he established a covenant with the patriarchs and when he instituted circumcision. In the New Testament the "household" phrase is used four or five times in connection with baptism (1 Cor. 1:16, Acts 16:15, 16:33, 18:8 and 11:14).

The church should re-think what it means to be a covenant family in which all of us, young and old, live under the sign of the cross. Let's discuss the right question.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Presbyterian Church revokes gay minister's call

Alan Doerksen and Marian Van Til

MONTREAL — The Presbyterian Church in Canada has revoked a suburban Montreal church's call of a minister who is a practising homosexual. Darryl Macdonald is the only openly gay man to have been called to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church. At the denomination's annual general assembly, held this year in Charlottetown in early June, church leaders spent a full day debating the issue.

Before his call, Macdonald had informed the selection committee at St. Andrew's Church in Lachine that he was gay and in a relationship. Ninety per cent of the committee agreed to hire him anyway. But some appealed the decision to the Montreal Presbytery. There, a majority

supported the decision. However, the matter was further appealed to the general assembly.

Because of the appeal process, Macdonald was never actually ordained, but St. Andrew's hired him as an "interim supply."

Which will hurt more?

Five of the nine members of the general assembly's advisory committee on the issue recommended that Macdonald's call be reversed unless he would agree to be celibate. The assembly agreed.

While acknowledging that St. Andrew's would be hurt by the decision, the assembly adopted the majority committee's view that the "hurt and damage to the denomination as a whole would be far more devastating should

the Presbyterian Church in Canada act in discontinuity with its deeply rooted understanding of Scripture."

The assembly said that Macdonald's call was "contrary to Scripture, the subordinate standards of the church, and all statements on homosexuality made by the past general assemblies."

Macdonald's status as a licensee (ministerial candidate) of the church will be re-examined. He was commended to the ministry committee of the Presbytery (classis) of Montreal for pastoral care. The presbytery was asked to consider appointing a chaplain for Macdonald "to offer him assistance through the time of transition facing him."

Bikes and Bibles bring denominations together

TORONTO (Can. Bible Soc.) — A ribbon of highway across Canada will help tie together a variety of churches for a good cause this summer and fall.

From Aug. 28 to Sept. 28, more than 100 churches from Vancouver to Mississauga, Ont., will provide food, lodging and encouragement to cyclists participating in Wheels Around the World (WATW), a cycling fundraising event of the United Bible Societies (UBS).

Riding for 'new readers'

About 65 WATW riders, with their "roadies" support crew, aim to raise money for literacy work conducted world-wide through UBS's "New Reader" Scripture program. The Canadian Bible Society is one of UBS's 120 members.

"Our mandate is to translate, publish and distribute the Scriptures," said Rev. Blain MacLeod, CBS district secretary for central Ontario. "That's the desire of all Christian groups. People feel very comfortable because the Canadian Bible Society is here to serve the churches."

Ecumenical teamwork is evident all along the 4,400 km WATW route. Various Protestant churches (Alliance, Anglican,

Baptist, Brethren, Mennonite, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, United Church) and Catholic churches are working together to find billets and prepare meals for the WATW cyclists.

"We are working on making sure this program is an ecumenical effort," said Rev. Christopher Pratt of St. George's Anglican Church in Owen Sound, Ont. Local Alliance and Lutheran churches will join St. George's in hosting the cross-Canada cyclists.

"I think all of us are united in our desire to make sure the proclamation of the Gospel and the good news of Jesus and his life, death and resurrection is shared," added the Owen Sound WATW co-ordinator. "The Canadian Bible Society is a group that allows us to work together to support a vital ministry."

Bible display on the Trans Canada

In Virden, Man., local Catholic, Mennonite, Pentecostal and United churches will treat WATW cyclists to a \$5 smorgasbord lunch at the Esso station. "The churches are all going to be participating and we are going to put up a large display of Bibles on the Trans Canada," said Ike Friesen, associate pastor

of Oak Lake Mennonite Church and local WATW co-ordinator.

"I think it's the vision of the Canadian Bible Society, the distribution of the Scriptures and also the concern about literacy; that combination with cycling and a marathon is an interesting one," said Dr. Peter Norris, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Evangelical Ministerial.

13 tours worldwide

WATW '96 is the first international expression of the Bike for Bibles Campaign launched in Australia in 1984. This year about 12 Bike for Bible tours, along with the Canadian WATW tour, together aim to raise \$1 million for New Reader Scripture programs around the world.

WATW athletes, scheduled to cross the finish line in Mississauga, Ont., on Sept. 28, will be a highlight of UBS's World Assembly being held in Toronto from Sept. 26 to Oct. 3, 1996.

About 350 delegates from 140 countries are expected to attend the UBS World Assembly, held once every eight years. Bible Society representatives from around the world are convening to consider issues such as fundraising, market research, leadership and technology as the 21st century approaches.

Feature

The best of intentions

Efforts at reform too often produce little but resentment

John Tissot

Next year will mark my 20th in the classroom. After all these years I believe I have become somewhat sensitive to human action and reaction. I don't claim great intuitive powers. I have presided over more than 3,000 daily "battles." I must have learned something in order to survive and preserve my sanity, as well as that of my students.

Outside of the classroom I observe adults creating more and more tension in their children and with each other, and all with the best of intentions.

I also wonder if the world has reached a point of such great tension that we each should walk around bearing a placard stating: "High Voltage. Danger."

Wrong moment

Let me give you a quick "film clip." One morning my car refused to start. I phoned my neighbor, Harry, and asked if he could take me to work.

"Sure," he answered, "come along. We'll have a careful though. My wife's going with me because she needs the car, and we can drop you and Janet off at school."

If we want to correct others without undue tensions, we must plan. What are we trying to accomplish? What timing would be best?

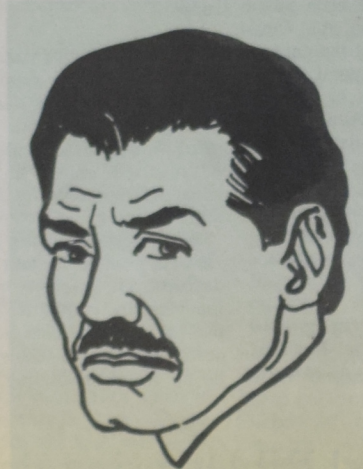
A few minutes later I was standing in their driveway making small talk with Harry. After he had looked at his watch for the third time, his wife and their daughter emerged from the house and hurried towards the car. Harry slid into the front seat at the wheel. His wife sat beside him. Janet and I found seats in the back. Harry inserted the key in the ignition and his wife chose this precise moment to turn around and glare at the girl.

"Janet, you didn't brush your teeth, did you?"

"Well, no."

"Go right in and do it," she commanded.

Janet ran into the house, skirt flying. When she returned two minutes later, she flounced in beside me again. Harry was grumbling under his breath about the boss wanting employees to be at work on time, and I was nervous with tension already. Harry's wife turned to him with a look even I understood: You wouldn't



want her to go to school without brushing her teeth, would you? And besides, she has to be taught to do these things.

Poor Harry had already used up enough energy in silent restraint to last him till 9:30. Janet had already forgotten the incident, thinking about the boy who sat across from her in math class.

What a waste

I don't know if this same incident was repeated the following morning, but knowing human nature, I suspect that it was. What a waste! All that energy gone down the emotional drain for lack of planning.

I grant that children must be taught to brush their teeth, but the time for the lesson is not when it's too late for the lesson to have any effect. If we want our children to learn to brush their teeth before they leave in the morning, we must make some sort of plan to teach the desired behavior in some way which will eliminate needless tension. And all teaching involves tension. The teacher (and all adults are teachers in one way or another) must keep the tension level down.

Harry's wife not only chose the wrong moment for the lesson, but she committed another tension-building sin. Did you recognize it?

Accusative case

Teachers who are to survive the give-and-take of the classroom eventually learn another lesson in how to prevent tension in children. What is it? Never accuse unless absolutely necessary.

Remember? Harry's wife said, "You didn't brush your teeth, did you?" How

do you react to accusations? I clench my teeth: children clench their fists. How much easier for Janet's mother to say, "Janet, if you didn't brush your teeth, there's still time for you to go up and do it." But best of all, don't wait for the wrong moment.

I have learned from working with youngsters that if one of them does something he shouldn't nine times in a row, and then is accused of the action when it occurs a 10th time and he is innocent, he will become very indignant. After years of experience, I learned to make it a rule not to accuse until I have checked out all other possibilities. Then, if I'm wrong, I have at least tried to prevent unnecessary tensions.

Think first

Do you start off your criticism with an accusation? If you don't know, stop and listen to yourself. If you discover you are guilty, observe the reaction caused by your accusation. Children appreciate politeness as much as adults do.

If we want to correct others without undue tensions, we must plan. What are we trying to accomplish? What timing would be best? Does a husband or wife want his or her spouse to prepare new dishes for supper. If so, mentioning this fact at the dinner table will probably mean that neither person will enjoy the food already on the table. Does a wife want her husband to hang up his clothes? If so, she had better catch him while he is still in the act of dressing, or he's going to go off to the office minus half an hour's energy.

Give up?

I can't promise that if you follow a few simple rules, you will always succeed. There will be failures. When that happens, we must take another hard look at reality. Perhaps, after all, the goal is not



worth the tensions and dissipated energy.

When I was first married, my wife and I lived in an old mining town in the Mother Lode section of California. A weekend painter, I liked to take Saturdays to go to neighboring towns to sketch in watercolor. Although I am the type of person who likes to get off to an early



start, my wife isn't. And we never did. I wasn't very scientific those days, and I must have fussed and nagged at my wife a great deal.

I remember one day very well. We left late as usual. We arrived at our destination after an hour's drive. I found a good location to paint and discovered I had left my watercolors at home. I had spent all my energies doing the wrong things at the wrong time.

After a number of years I realized I was very inefficient. So I started doing those things in the morning which I thought would help us get out of the house early. Still no results. I finally came to the conclusion I was wasting my time and energies, and that the latter could be better spent than in fussing around. Recently we were to visit my parents on an overnight trip. The morning we were to depart I said nothing about getting an early start. I went to my typewriter, and wrote three long letters I had been meaning to get off. When we finally drove out our driveway that morning — late — my wife and I were both in good spirits.

The population explosion is inexorably forcing us into closer quarters with our fellow creatures. Personal relations are going to be increasingly important. If we wish to influence others, we must lower tensions, be consistent, watch our timing and be polite.

John Tissot is a teacher and writer who lives in Carpinteria, Calif.

Feature

Of winners and losers

Sarah Whitler

The tension that has been mounting in you for weeks is at its peak, tightening your muscles; quickening your breath. You hear the officials call your event for the second time; the activity around you fades into a humming background as you lapse into meditation. In previous meets you had beaten all the other runners with ease; still *she* remained lodged inside your mind, goading you to greater victory. *She* had defeated you at the beginning of the season, and at that moment you vowed that it would never happen again. You were thorough, delving into specific training since you had conceded to *her* greater skill.

You're on. It's your time to shine; or the moment you'll always remember as "if only."

Weight training daily, hundreds of knee lifts, gruelling distance running, working on a trampoline for hours on end — all of this work, building up for *this* race, a chance to redeem yourself in your own eyes. It was now or never. Three hundred metres, the seemingly endless hurdles, you, your shoes, your speed, your desire to win, your responsibility to yourself and to your team. No handoff; no one else to blame; just you.

Third call. You're on. It's your time to shine; or the moment you'll always remember as "if only." You drag your starting block from the side of the track to your lane, lane five. Your hair has been scraped back and pinned down in order to streamline your body. Why does this block seem so heavy? Anticipation: your heart is beating furiously. Adrenalin is coursing through your veins, causing you to tremble slightly. You feel as if you could explode. *She's* in lane one. "Lucky," you think. *She* can see all of the runners. You know, you have this awareness, it's as if you're the only two on the track. All eyes will be on you. It would be completely humiliating to fail, to trip out of your starting block. You're nervous, but who isn't? This is the race that will decide the champion for the whole of the county.

You set your starting block. Left block four notches from the back, right block twelve notches from the back. You step into it and practice your exit. It's as comfortable as it will be. You grab one of your teammates to stand on the rear end of the block, bracing it for when you must hurl your weight against it. The runners talk and stretch, letting off steam while the guys finish their race. Choruses of "good luck" are exchanged, and you



smile at *her*. *She* smiles back, then asks the starter a question.

"ON YOUR MARK!"

Once again you back into your block, setting your feet in place and bridging your hands just shy of the start line.

"GET SET!"

You push yourself up on your hands, the rough track digging into your skin, staining it black. Keeping your right leg at a ninety degree angle, you lift your rear end until it is just about even with the height of your shoulders. Now it's time to wait. Waiting is the most agonizing part of the race, except for the last few steps you take across the finish line. Someone is impatient and false starts, shooting out of position. Reflex: everyone else follows *her*. *She's* disqualified. You feel sorry for *her*, but this gives you a moment to relax. "No hurry, no hurry," the starter assures everyone. You flex your leg muscles, shake your arms loose, clenching and unclenching your hands as you wait to begin again.

"ON YOUR MARK!"

This time everyone's uptight. They're all thinking, "Will I mess up?"

"GET SET!"

You seem to hold your position forever. There ought to be a rule as to how long a starter can delay between each command.

"BANG!"

The shot, and everybody launches out

of their blocks. You approach the first hurdle. Your stride feels awkward; you double-step so you can lead with your left leg extended. This leaves your strongest leg, the right, to push you over. Before your second hurdle you've corrected your steps and skim over the wooden bar with ease. You can feel your muscles moving in unison — smooth, tight precision propelling you up and over. You hear metal strike the track, a thud, and a yelp of pain. You know that feeling; it has happened to you. Someone is down, one less runner.

Your legs are so tired, you'll be lucky if you can stand when once you've finished. You're almost there, so close, a few more steps... come on!

For the moment the crowd of hurdlers is behind you, all except *her*. Another hurdle and you're gaining momentum. Out of the corner of your eye you see one of the pack speed up, but it's not *her*. The sudden burst of speed dies quickly, and rounding the corner you pass the girl without trying. You're jumping almost mechanically now, concentrating on keeping your movement fluid, not even noticing the number of hurdles you're

gliding over. You don't look back — never look back — for fear it will slow you down. You seem to have a sixth sense when it comes to detecting *her* whereabouts. *She's* moving up.

Entering the straight-away a blast of wind hits you like a wall, knocking the breath from your lungs and causing your step to falter. You recover, but *she's* just a step ahead of you. Just a step, but it means too much. You redouble your efforts. You will pass *her*, you have to.

→ → →

Your second wind brings an explosion of energy, and you are neck-and-neck with *her*, flying through the home stretch. Both of you, pushing yourselves to the utmost limits. Neither of you is gaining ground on the other; frustration makes your eyes burn. You stumble ever so slightly once you hit the ground after the last hurdle, enough for *her* to pull ahead less than half a beat. Your legs are pumping triple-time in order to catch *her*, but everything seems to be moving in slow motion.

People on the sidelines are screaming, a blur of color and sound — dull compared to the blood roaring in your ears. You close that oh-so-slight distance by even more. Your legs are so tired, you'll be lucky if you can stand when once you've finished. You're almost there, so close, a few more steps... come on! Finally, the white tape, proclaiming the end of your efforts. You both cross the finish line in almost the same instant, your lungs burning.

Your speed carries you well past the line. Reigning in your muscles, you slow to a jog then walk back to the finish line together, eagerly awaiting the timers' verdicts. Approaching the official in your lane, *he* hands you your time. You've taken second place by one tenth of a second. Disappointment washes over you accompanied by a tinge of self-disgust. You can't believe it — all that work! Your coach runs up from the sideline and claps you on the back. You've broken the longest-standing track record held at your high school. You receive your medal with a huge smile — your work wasn't wasted, and when the crowd begins to disperse, *she* approaches you.

You're stunned when *she* thanks you and tells you that your competition pushed *her* into the best run *she's* ever had. *She* also broke *her* school's record, never mind setting one for the county. You offer your congratulations and as you walk away you call to *her* over your shoulder.

"I'll get you next time," you smile. *She* laughs, waves, and turns in the other direction. Maybe second place isn't so bad; once in a while.

Feature

The Reformed Ecumenical Council:

Marian Van Til

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — "After World War I, there was some discussion among a few Dutch and Dutch immigrant churches about co-operating more closely. From the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gerformeerde Kerken in Nederland, GKN), from the

14 to 30, 1946, in Grand Rapids. There were four Dutch, three South Africans and 10 CRC delegates. Observers from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Free Magyar Reformed Church also attended.

In the fast-changing, post-war world the churches felt a strong need for unity. To them, "ecu-

menical" meant "international," and they hoped their group would be not only able to "reach around the world to like-minded Christians," but to become a true synod.

The REC was, and is even more today, an international body, but it never became a true synod, having the authority to speak for its member churches. The group officially recognized that in 1988 when it changed its name to Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC).

Four years later the RES met again, in another Reformation centre: Edinburgh, Scotland. Thirty-four churches had been invited to send delegates to the 1953 assembly; only 10 did so. For the first time racial issues came to the table. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church wanted to know whether the South African churches supported apartheid. Some bristled at discussing this, considering it a "political" issue. But the synod decided that racism required careful study; the study would focus on South Africa and the United States.

Only eight years after the RES's inception, it was also discovering that it had to think carefully about what *ecumenical* really meant. Some member churches had already joined the WCC, but there was divided opinion as to whether that was appropriate. RES also decided it could not endorse other ecumenical movements such as the International Council of Christian Churches and the World Evangelical Fellowship.

It was six years before the RES met again, this time in South Africa (Potchefstroom). Appropriately, the major issue at the 1958 meeting was race relations. A long report on that issue had concluded that "there could be a special calling for a 'people,' a group that might be racially or ethnically deter-

mined. This calling, however, gave no one a preferential position, but only duties to God." It was said that nations, for example, have particular vocations, but all people are "called to self-determination and self-realization in liberty."

The RES turned its attention to the emerging (black) Reformed churches in other parts of Africa, and to the state of Christianity as a whole on that continent. But it would be some time before any of those churches would be invited to join the group.

The RES recognized that perhaps it was not becoming the "effective instrument of ecumenicity envisioned by its founders." To be more effective, the RES should distribute its reports in pamphlet form and publish a journal, suggested the CRC. The CRC also called for a permanent secretary and a standing committee to act for the synod. Only the committee was agreed to at that time.

A turning point

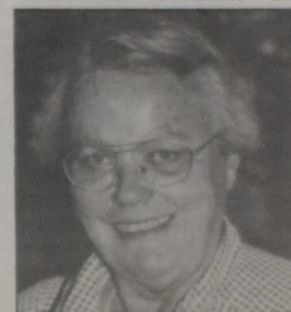
Between the 1958 and 1963 synods an "interim executive secretary" was appointed, but not without protest from some members. Twenty-one churches sent delegates to the 1963 meeting in Grand Rapids; another five denominations attended as observers.

In two ways, the 1963 assembly marked a turning point, says *Memories*.

"First, the theological agenda of the early RES came to completion. The report on eschatology, mandated back in 1949, was the last report whose goal was agreement on classical theological doctrine."

ing of this article. Gradually it was recognized that member churches would go their own ways on various issues. And after 1963, theological studies were directed at the problems faced by the member churches.

The first of these studies was precipitated by the GKN, which wanted to re-examine the



Rev. M. van der Veen-Schenke, the first ordained woman in parish ministry in the GKN, in 1970.

churches' ecumenical calling by taking a new look at possible relations with the World Council of Churches and with the Roman Catholic Church. "Here was a self-conscious attempt to reconsider the purpose of the RES," says *Memories*.

The creation of a permanent secretariat was the second event that marked the turning point. The RES needed an address and an office, it was decided, and Dr. Paul Schrottenboer was elected to fill the part-time job. Within a year, the job was full time, and the RES also began to publish *News Exchange*, a monthly newsletter/press release still being produced. The first standing committee — on missions — was also formed.

Race relations returned again but "were not faced squarely"; and heeding the seemingly good Reformed axiom, "When in doubt, form another study committee," the RES did just that.

GKN questions begin

Amsterdam 1968 brought the first mention of "women in office" — introduced, not surprisingly, by the GKN. The GKN wanted women deacons but had refrained from ordaining them until it heard possible principal objections from other RES members. While the GKN had presented a lengthy study report on the issue, the RES rejected further study of it: it was "the



General secretary Richard Van Houten receives advice from former general secretary Paul Schrottenboer

Reformed Churches in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Africa, GKSA) and from the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) came calls for an international meeting of Reformed churches. In 1939 the GKSA and CRCNA, the two immigrant sister churches of the GKN, were at [the GKN's] synod in Sneek. They tentatively agreed to convene a meeting, to create a Reformed ecumenical synod."

Thus began "an ecumenical journey," which is outlined in a booklet called *Memories*, published this year for the 50th anniversary meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Council in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The actual journey didn't get under way immediately; war interrupted the plans. But by 1944, confident of the Allies victory, the Americans and South Africans agreed to meet as soon as possible after the war. On July 12, 1945, Jacob Hoogstra of the CRC wrote to Prof. Gerhard Aalders of the GKN proposing that the CRC host a meeting limited to the three churches involved in the earlier discussions.

So the First Reformed Ecumenical Synod met from August

To the Netherlands

In 1949, 14 Reformed churches sent delegates to the second RES assembly, in Amsterdam. Theological agreement was considered "very important for a clear Reformed witness." And they believed that coming to a "clear and common view of the truths of Scripture was one of the main reasons for ecumenicity," says *Memories*. Thus, they were concerned about the newly formed World Council of Churches (WCC).

Among the specific issues discussed in 1949 were views of marriage, eschatology (the end times), principles of Christian education, creation and evolution, and church-state relations.



African delegates came from Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

worked at theological unity, but in 1963 it became clear that was not possible. A debate about Article 36 of the *Belgic Confession*, which deals with the relation of church and state, demonstrated that. Some member churches had changed their view and had altered the word-

The RES turned its attention to the emerging (black)

from birth to 50, with blessings

plain and obvious teaching of Scripture that women are excluded from the office of ruling and preaching leaders."

In 1972, RES met in Sydney, Australia, with 31 of its 34 member churches present. Once again race relations were discussed. But the group still did not speak unequivocally on the

press that they had merely abstained from voting.

Even amid the racial turmoil, the issue of the GKN and the unorthodox views of some of its theologians returned to the table. But once again GKN delegates assured the others that the views of the theologians in question were being investigated.

By 1984, world criticism of apartheid had intensified and international economic sanctions against South Africa were in place. Black churches now had a stronger voice, and they wanted Christian defenders of apartheid to be declared heretical.

issue, and it would continue to appear on future agendas.

Now RES faced a serious challenge on qualifications for membership, aimed at the GKN. For the first time, other members questioned whether the GKN still qualified for membership, and expressed concern about the situation in that church.

Racial tensions flare

Capetown, South Africa, was the explosive setting for the 1976 assembly, just two months after the race riots and tragedy in Soweto. On the night of the opening worship, a school across the road was set on fire. Members of the RES's host church, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, were among those arrested at the scene. Black delegates went out into black townships to survey the situation.

A resolution passed by the RES called on the government to "alleviate burdens that contribute to the rise of these riots..."; it also called on the people to "refrain from fomenting unrest and violence in the present, tense situation." A more strongly worded resolution mentioning specifics such as detention without trial, the migrant labor system and lack of black voice in government failed to gain enough support.

Interracial worship and marriage again came to the fore as well, as they had in 1968 and '72. The Bible does not forbid interracial marriage, it was reiterated. While a resolution on the subject passed without a dissenting vote, it was assumed the white South Africans had changed their minds on the issue. But they admitted to the

The assembly in Nimes, France, in 1980 was marked by conflict about old subjects — race relations, the World Council of Churches, church discipline in the GKN — and new: homosexuality. Ever at the *avant garde*, the GKN had a year earlier issued a "pastoral statement" which did not condemn homosexual practice, and without biblical argument to support their view. The issue sparked heated debate and resulted in the RES passing resolutions at the next three meetings (1984, '88 and '92) stating that all homosexual practice is sin. In the minds of many delegates, this issue marked what they felt was a turning away from Reformed tradition on the part of the GKN.

How is 'God with us'?

By 1984, world criticism of apartheid had intensified and international economic sanctions against South Africa were in place. Black churches now had a stronger voice, and they wanted Christian defenders of apartheid to be declared heretical.

The two white South African churches were asked to re-examine their support of government policies and report in two years. RES also outlined specific situations in which race distinctions were absolutes, and therefore a denial of our common humanity. The synod defined when a *status confesionis* would occur, and when a teaching should be called heretical. "It called on its South African members to consider whether this time had arrived for them," says *Memories*.

The GKN was, yet again, the other main topic. It presented the hermeneutical study *God*

met ons (God with us), which aimed to outline the biblical methods used in its 1979 decision on homosexuals. (The RES's own study on homosexuality was not yet complete.) The Dutch document was debated fiercely, "especially the brief statement that truth was relational," but the RES wanted to complete its own study before addressing the GKN's possible ousting.

Amid this difficult time, the RES realized that its own structures were strained and decided that a major constitutional revision was necessary. "Thus the churches began to sort out again what they wanted the RES to be."

At Harare 1988 Richard Van Houten was introduced as the new general secretary, replacing the retiring Paul Schrottenboer.

At Harare, race relations took a dramatic turn. For the first time anywhere, a representative of the (white) Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa declared that apartheid is sin — but only after days of discussion and a half-day public debate.

Amid predictions of a crisis and great bloodshed in South Africa came a proposal for a special REC-sponsored consultation on race relations. Tensions were high in South Africa, and the REC was the only organization that still had white and black Reformed churches in active membership. "The meeting

was electrified when all agreed, and a near-unanimous decision was met with a consensus that God had worked among them," says *Memories*.

The consultation took place the next year in Vereeniging, South Africa. Sixty delegates from 10 southern African REC member churches talked together for five days in one large room. "The pendulum swung back and forth, but in the end, all the black churches agreed there should be one united Reformed church." The Dutch Reformed Church would not yet accept that decision.

Saying goodbye is hard to do

In 1982 REC's Commission for Youth and Christian Education (CYCE) had begun to organize regional conferences in southern Africa, providing support and interaction for youth leaders, pastors and elders. REC also began to address the needs of its younger member churches, most of whom were in the Third World.

The Athens 1992 assembly was volatile for a different reason than the Harare assembly had been. In Athens, questions about the GKN came to a head.

The Interim Committee had conducted an investigation into the GKN, as requested by the 1988 assembly, and recommended that the GKN be allowed to stay. Not everyone

agreed. A motion to oust the GKN was debated for half a day and finally failed. Delegates wanted some other action taken, though three attempts to penalize or restrict the GKN also failed.

At that point, GKN delegates left, not knowing whether they wanted their church to continue in the REC or not. The GKN did



Claire Elgersma from Ancaster, Ont., was the first clerk and the first female officer in REC's history

remain, but their continued presence caused several conservative member churches to leave.

As apartheid was dismantled in South Africa, relations between the black and white Reformed churches there improved dramatically. A process of uniting was begun and is continuing which will bring together into one church the Dutch Reformed Church, the Uniting Reformed Church and the Reformed Church in Africa.

A proliferation of world problems affecting member churches, and the resigning of some member churches whose focus was largely theological, helped set the REC on what might be called a diaconal path as opposed to a theological one. There's drought in Africa. What will REC do to help its African members? A church is so poor that a congregation can't pay for a new roof. Will REC help? That shift towards greater "deed" ministry was particularly apparent in Grand Rapids this year.

The 50th anniversary meeting was, appropriately, marked by congeniality and a determination to work together more closely as worldwide Reformed churches in carrying the gospel, in word and deed, to the secular cultures in which the members find themselves.



REC delegates and CRC synod delegates take a break from work: a twirl on the carousel at the Van Andel Museum.

Feature

The Internet will change our civilization

A world-wide web of wonders (2)

Bill Van Dyk

Sometimes the most important effects of a new technology are completely unforeseen and unanticipated. Take, for example, the lowly transistor, which was invented in the 1950s by a pair of technicians at Bell Labs. Scientists wrote thousands of articles and books on possible future applications and how they would affect our lives. Not one of them, to my knowledge, imagined rock'n'roll or the 1960s counter-culture. But the transistor made possible the portable radio, which made it possible for teenagers to listen to music in their rooms and cars, which created an entirely new audience for radio programming, which made it possible for rock'n'roll music to become popular.

For the first time in a long time, a big new technology actually places a premium on intelligence. Some writers call it the "revenge of the nerds."

We are probably only dimly aware now of the kind of developments that will take place as a result of the Internet. We can only guess about the future, but I would like to suggest a few key areas we should be concerned about.

I should note that I am an optimist: my personal experience of the Internet has been extremely positive. I've made friends, linked up with people with similar interests and I am excited by the general intellectual ferment I see taking place in some newsgroups. I find the wide-open, uncommercialized atmosphere refreshing. I find it an absolutely unrivalled source of information about just about anything you can imagine — like having a library in your house, if you will.

Anyway, some off-the-cuff predictions, which I freely invite history to prove wrong.

1. Our society will become more literate, more sophisticated and more democratic than ever before.

For the first time in a long time, a big new technology actually places a premium on intelligence. Some writers call it the "revenge of the nerds." In newsgroups everywhere, the most popular and respected participants are those who can demonstrate wit, intelligence, literacy and technical savvy. Looks don't count. Athleticism is irrelevant. People are judged almost exclusively on the basis of what they think, or how well they express what they think. For all the excitement about multi-media, the Internet is still pre-eminently a place of words, and those who use words well will thrive there. I think this will spill over into society in general, and we may begin to see a renewed respect for learning and literacy, if only for the reason that these skills mean power in the wired community.

I predict that within a few years we will see the first "internet candidate," a politician who gained influence and power through his or her e-mail messaging.

2. War will end.

That's right, you heard it here first, and I hope I don't disappoint the dispensationalists too much. War has always been an act of massive, destructive stupidity, but now, for the first time, the general public will not be as susceptible to propaganda and deceit. Sure, call me a dreamer. Just don't tell me that a vision of peace in our life-time is *unbiblical* (as some have told me!)

3. War will start.

That's right, you heard it here first, and I don't mind holding contradictory views. This war, however, will not be about territory or ethnic cleansing or

imperialist ambitions. It will be between those who believe information should be free (including software and images and music) and those who would copyright the English alphabet if they could. Already in the U.S. some people are filing copyrights for their own DNA, in anticipation of the coming battle over intellectual property rights.

I believe that intellectual property rights may well be the next big cultural battleground, and I think it could get pretty ugly. I believe that we as Christians should display integrity and moral leadership on copyright issues, but I also believe that copyright owners are going to have to start being far more reasonable about "fair use"; and part of the discussion is going to have to include a concept of "fair price."

The copyright notices you read on most software packages are grossly inflated and the truth is that no software company in its right mind will try to defend most of these claims in court for fear of losing the case and setting a very public precedent. This is a very emotional, complex issue; and believe me, we're going to hear a lot about it in the next few years. (Note: U.S. Vice-President Al Gore's National Information Infrastructure has released a white paper calling for legislation which would give dramatic — and frightening — new powers to copyright holders and publishers. This committee happens to be chaired by a former software company lobbyist. The present Congress is dominated by pro-business conservatives likely to pass the bill.)

3. There will be more, not less, public, social activity because of the Internet.

There will be more art shows, theatrical presentations, concerts, parties, meetings. Now, I know this sounds odd at first, but consider this: all technologies are ultimately boring. Listen to the radio — do you

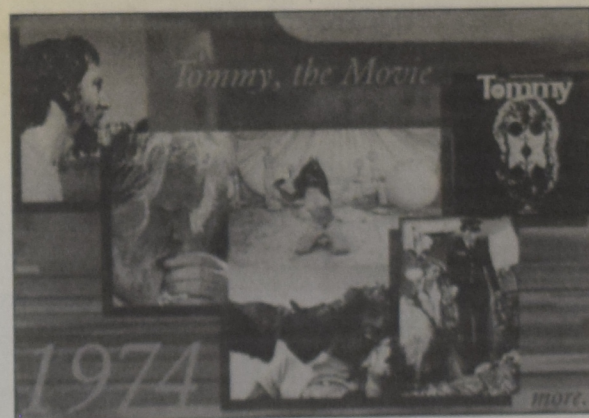
hear a lot of rock groups using programmed drums and synthesizers? Do you hear slick, technically perfect recordings, pitch-corrected and awash in aural sap? Quite the opposite. The overwhelming majority of rock groups use electric and acoustic guitars, piano and real drums, and they leave the odd mistake — missed pitch, feedback, broken string — in the recording. Some have even gone back to the *acoustic* stand-up bass. Why? Because technology makes everyone sound alike, and the life-blood of a popular artist is his or her distinctive personality.

In the same way, I believe that once the majority of people have adapted to the Internet and find themselves spending much of their work-days at the computer, they will begin to increase the value they place on real social interactivity. It will become something special, because it is personal and real. There may

Christians to present cogent analysis, suggest solutions and to express our understanding of human realities. But if we do so, we must become literate in the ways of the web.

5. We're going to feel some stress.

I spend most of my professional day trying to keep up with the Internet. Web sites, new software, new hardware, and new social, political, and ethical issues that are related to these new technologies. It's a lot of work and requires a lot of reading; and more than a little thinking. There are times I'd like to just get into a boat and sail off to some island somewhere. But I think we'll all adapt and survive, and face the future with the kind of courage my son displays when he just gets on the computer, dials into the Internet and starts looking for his



A screen from the Who's new CD-ROM. Just as the transistor transformed the 1960s, the Internet is transforming the 1990s.

even (gasp) be a revival in church attendance.

favourite sites. After all, it's still fun.

4. We will be asking ourselves a lot of questions about morality and ethics and spirituality.

The Internet is unprecedented in the way it allows anyone, no matter how off-centre his or her opinions and ideas, to be heard. There are serious discussions on the Internet right now about subjects that have never been discussed publicly before. Some of these ideas are disturbing, but can there be any doubt that our society needs new ideas?

This is an opportunity for

I think the best specialized source of information about the Internet and about computers, technology and the electronic society in general is *Wired* magazine. If Abraham Kuyper were here today, he might say you should have the Bible in one hand and *Wired* in the other... but brace yourself.

Bill Van Dyk is a computer consultant with a strong interest in the information media. He lives in Kitchen, Ont.

News/Advice

'Yin' and 'yang' infuses Chinese thinking



Eric Hagt (L.) with a traditional Chinese physician well-known for making acupuncture needles.

Eric D. Hagt

The ancient Chinese theory of yin and yang is integral in understanding Chinese medicine, culture, philosophy and even political theology.

For Lu Ming, diagnosed with cancer by Western medicine, this terminal condition was seen by Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a serious undermining of his body's harmony and balance. But even the political struggle between two superpowers is also viewed as the dynamics occurring in the balance of the yin and yang.

The concept of yin and yang, which evolved in the third-century B.C., developed to explain the law of change in nature. Yin and yang represent the two sides of any object or phenomenon in the universe; yin and yang, which are in conflict, are at the same time interdependent; any change is attributed to the yin-yang change within it. Neither can exist in isolation. Without "upper" there would be no "lower," without "moving" there would be no "quiescent."

TCM uses yin and yang to discuss interrelationships and interdependence of not only organ systems and the minutiae of how the body's energies work, but what food to eat, how to maintain balance emotionally, and how to live life in harmony with the seasons, weather and just about everything else.

Non-equilibrium with the natural world

Any sickness, from a cold to severe psychological disturbance is regarded fundamentally

as non-equilibrium of the yin-yang unity of opposites, either within the body or of the body in relation to the natural world.

The carcinoma, therefore, is recognized by the TCM practitioner but is not the focal point of treatment. Rather, the patient is regarded as an organic whole and in unity with the natural world. Treatment is decided within this perspective.

All is explainable

In light of the yin-yang principle, nearly any other phenomenon can be defined and justified under these concepts. The antagonism between the U.S. and Russia during the Cold War is a poignant example of this necessary equilibrium. The puissance of one of these superpowers could tip the balance towards oppression by one or the other opposite ideologies. Now, with the demise of the Soviet regime and end of the Cold War, a vacuum of power has been created. Perhaps this is a rationale for China's becoming an ever looming threat as the new superpower.

The concept of yin and yang both divides and unifies the world and existing phenomenon. The activities of the universe, chemical reactions to cosmic changes, are described in these terms and can change as circumstances change. The manifestations of these theories are the key to understanding the Chinese mind.

Eric Hagt is a Canadian medical student living in China.

Peter and Marja are IN



'Good' investments involve more than good management

Dear Readers:

Earlier this spring we answered two writers who feel

that the Christian Reformed Church is too business-like in its financial dealings. We, however, complimented the investment strategies of the Ministers' Pension Fund and other agencies for their good stewardship and far-sightedness. Today two other writers respond to our April 26 column.

Dear P & M:

I'm writing to tell you that your answer was right on. Not only the younger generation, but also we elderly (I'm 76), will be happy with good stewardship and wise investment of our money.

In 1961 I attended my first synod and was disappointed with the way the Ministers' Pension Fund was managed. It was on a "pay as you go" basis. I argued for a different approach and was happy when Synod 1968 established a well-funded pension plan.

Of course, not everyone was happy. Enclosed is a rebuttal I wrote to a former CRC pastor who has since left the denomination to start his own independent church. I'm sure he'll be glad to receive his monthly pension cheques from our denomination when he retires.

In the past, Dr. Ray VanderWeele managed very well, and today Chris Cok also does an excellent job. Thanks to their hard work we can thankfully say that 2850 Kalamazoo is a well-run business.

Some pastors still complain that their pension is not enough. In my opinion the problem lies with the fact that many of them have been provided with parsonages throughout their ministry. If they haven't saved, they'll have a hard time making ends meet.

Dear In Agreement:

We won't identify you and the pastor whom you rebutted, but we found it interesting that this debate took place almost 30 years ago. Thanks for speaking up then so that decisions could be made that benefit the church today.

We also agree with you about ministers and parsonages. Living in a parsonage is like renting: when it's time to move you have nothing to show for it. Buying a house forces you to make monthly payments which build up the kind of equity you need for the future. It also forces you to learn all the ins and outs of home ownership. Without this enforced discipline it's very hard to save for a comfortable retirement. If a church is willing to provide a housing allowance, why not use it to invest in your own home?

Dear P & M:

I have nothing against the CRC investing its funds; it is a fiscally responsible action that is defensible with the Bible. But I oppose the prevalent narrow thought that its investment strategy is fine as long as it avoids companies that produce or promote alcohol, tobacco and/or pornography.

When our church thinks about criteria for investing it should realize that it is possible to be environmentally, socially, spiritually and economically responsible. Today there is more and more talk of "investing in the poor." There are banks that invest directly in the poor to start employment on their level. Some co-operatives that have developed even bring a good return on their investment. From now on the World Council of Churches will invest 10 per cent of its portfolio into the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society (EDCS) which has a very practical view on responding to God's call for us to be good stewards.

Whatever we do, we must avoid the kind of situation which saw a certain church invest funds in a fruit company that evicted poor farmers in the Philippines and left them with nothing. The same church sent missionaries to those same farmers to pastor among them with the dividends of their investments. How ironic. And tragic! I can only imagine how many ways our denomination encourages companies that may be working against the fruit of the CRWRC and World Missions.

Dear Investing In the Poor:

Good point. Let's hope that our denominational agencies do their homework and invest our funds in ways that also promote the Kingdom and defend the poor.

Your consciousness-raising letter helps us see the bigger financial picture and calls for prayerful investment decisions.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Classifieds

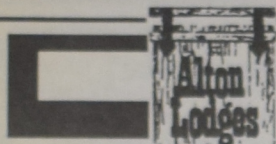
Classified Rates	Births	Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Anniversaries
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p>HERREWYNEN/DORSMAN:</p> <p>"I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful" (Ps.139:14).</p> <p>Giving thanks to God for another precious gift, Jim and Helen are proud to announce the birth of their son</p> <p>BRANDON SCOTT</p> <p>A brother for Matthew and Kristen. Born May 30, 1996, weighing 9 lbs., 15 oz.</p> <p>Proud grandparents are Cees and Elisabeth Dorsman of Waterdown, Ont., and Martin and Christine Herrewynen of Burlington, Ont. Also, great-grandparents are Dirk and Rita Wesseling of Brampton, Ont., and Nellie Herrewynen of Townsend, Ont.</p> <p>Home address: 2351 Coldstream Drive, Burlington, ON L7P 3T2 (905) 332-8057.</p>		<p>Woodstock 1956 July 20 Woodstock 1996</p> <p>"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Ps.91:11).</p> <p>It is with happiness and thankfulness to the Lord that we celebrate "our extra special" parents' 40th anniversary.</p> <p>HANK AND BETTY HORINGA (nee HOITING)</p> <p>Coby & Harry Knibbe — Aylmer, Ont. Anthony, Mike, Jamie, Amy Jake & Ann Horinga — Woodstock, Ont. Julie, Brent, Stacy Jenny & George VanderVeen — St. Thomas, Ont. Ryan, Kevin Martha & Luke Sikkens — Fenwick, Ont. Elizabeth, Kurt, Holly Geraldine & John Bouwers — Eden, Ont. Joshua, Rachel, Matthew, Lucas Sid & Jeannette Horinga — Dunnville, Ont. Jesse, Devin Liz & Bruce Zantingh — St. Ann's, Ont. Nicole, Sara Henry & Sue Horinga — Woodstock, Ont. Justin, Larissa John & Jennifer Horinga — Princeton, Ont. Jeff Horinga — Woodstock, Ont.</p> <p>We all love you a lot!</p> <p>We plan to have an open house, D.V., on July 20, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., in the Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church in Woodstock, Ont.</p> <p>Best wishes only please. Home address: R.R. #4, Woodstock, ON N4S 7V8</p>	<p>Marriages</p> <p>VREUGDENHIL/WITTEVEEN:</p> <p>Kees and Liz Vreugdenhil of Chatham, Ont., are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter</p> <p>CORINE JENNIFER to STEPHEN FREDERICK</p> <p>son of Ike and Jennie Witteveen of Brighton, Ont.</p> <p>The ceremony will take place, D.V., on Saturday, July 20, 1996, at 4:30 p.m., at Mast Acres, 7975 Grand River Line in Chatham, Ont., with Rev. Ralph Koops officiating.</p> <p>Future address: 12 Passy, Apt. 108, York University, 4700 Keele St., North York, ON M3J 1P3</p>
	<p>Events</p> <p>Hollandse Dag July 10, 1996 at 9:30 a.m. in Caradoc Community Centre Mt. Brydges, Ont.</p>			
<p>Employment Wanted</p> <p>EQUIPMENT OPERATOR/ HIRED HAND</p> <p>Tractors, combines, loaders, back-hoes, trucks; I have operated and maintained them all. Cattle experience as well. Seeking full-time employment in cash crop, feed lot, custom operation or construction. For a resume or questions please call (613) 823-1396.</p>	<p>Personal</p> <p>ONE TO ANOTHER</p> <p>Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5.</p> <p>Write to: #302, 1502-2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2</p>	<p>For Rent</p> <p>For rent: Bright basement room available in quiet home for non-smoking university student. Incl. cable, appliances, laundry facilities, furnished/non-furnished, personal bathroom, shared entrance. Ample parking, close to shopping, on major busroute. Pets allowed. \$275 per month. Call (905) 935-1086, St. Catharines, Ont.</p> <p>University student looking for male student to share furnished apartment very close to Fanshawe College. Very neat and reasonable in London, Ont.</p> <p>Call Stephen at (519) 451-6787.</p> <p>Very charming renovated 1869 church in Hamilton area with 3 bedrooms, livingroom, diningroom, kitchen, laundry. Private entr. Rent negotiable. 10 min. to Redeemer College; 15 min. to McMaster and Mohawk. Available immediately. Call 905-648-4987.</p>	<p>Anniversaries</p> <p>Happy 25th wedding anniversary to JIM and JANE LISE married July 3, 1971.</p> <p>We all love you a lot and may God bless you in your continuing years together.</p> <p>Love always from your children:</p> <p>Arie John Henry Jennifer Peter</p> <p>"This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).</p> <p>Address: 149 McClung Rd., R.R. #1, Caledonia, ON N3W 1V4</p>	<p>Obituaries</p> <p>March 1, 1910 - June 7, 1996</p> <p>"I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23:6).</p> <p>The Lord called home his child HENDERIK DE VRIES on Friday, June 7, 1996. He died peacefully at home.</p> <p>Dearly loved husband, father and grandfather.</p> <p>Beloved husband of Maria (nee Nategaal).</p> <p>Dear father of:</p> <p>John — Burgessville Mary & Art Nieuwland — Drayton Dick — Surrey Henry & Joanne — Tillsonburg Peter & Faye — Ruthven</p> <p>He will be sadly missed by his grandchildren Paula, Scott, Tamara, Sherry, Richard, Brandon, Bill, Jamie, Jeff, Christopher and Michael.</p> <p>Survived by two sisters in the Netherlands. Predeceased by two brothers.</p> <p>Correspondence address: Maria De Vries, R.R. #1, Burgessville, ON N0J 1C0.</p>
<p>See our Calendar of Events on page 19...</p>			<p>Bed & Breakfast</p> <p>Bed & Breakfast in Zeist, the Netherlands 35 guilders per person, per night. Call Dorothy at 011-31-30-6921755.</p>	

Classifieds

Anniversaries	Obituaries	For Sale	Job Opportunities
<p>Athens, Ont. Winchester, Ont. 1956 Sept. 4 1996</p> <p>FRED and MARTJE BOUWERS (DIJKEMA)</p> <p>With gratefulness to God we are delighted to announce our parents' and grandparents' 40th anniversary. John — Coaldale, Alta.</p> <p>Clarence & Judy (VanBoven) — Black Creek, B.C.</p> <p>Daniel, Angela, Michelle, Stephanie, Alissa, Jessica</p> <p>Allan & Cindy (Stronks) — Calgary, Alta.</p> <p>Kennan, Aric</p> <p>Elsa & Elmer VanDyk — Coaldale, Alta.</p> <p>Jeffrey, Serena, Alec</p> <p>Janice & Wayne Cunningham — Nanaimo, B.C.</p> <p>Rick, Marina</p> <p>Lucy & Marvin Roseboom — Terrace, B.C.</p> <p>Jacob, Karyn, and ?</p> <p>Randy & Stacey (Halbersma) — Surrey, B.C.</p> <p>Mary-Anne & Jake Kraan — Ladner, B.C.</p> <p>Janessa</p> <p>Michael & Jolly (Mathew) — Surrey, B.C.</p> <p>Juliana</p> <p>We hope to celebrate together as family and friends on Saturday, Aug. 10, 1996, with an open reception starting at 7:30 p.m., at the Lion's Hall on Mill Street in Winchester, Ont.</p> <p>Your being there is your gift to us.</p> <p>Address: R.R. #2, Winchester, ON K0C 2K0, Phone: (613) 774-2094.</p>	<p>July 29, 1917 - June 18, 1996</p> <p>"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands" (2 Cor. 5:1).</p> <p>Suddenly, as the result of an automobile accident, on June 18, 1996, the Lord in His infinite mercy called to Himself</p> <p>ROELFINA "ROELIE" (RUBY) JANTINA SIEDERS-DE WITT (nee BROEKEMA)</p> <p>Beloved wife of John De Witt and the late Koert "Jim" Sieders.</p> <p>Dear mother of:</p> <p>Johanna & Stewart English — Thessalon, Ont.</p> <p>Henry & Grace Sieders — Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>Jake & Rita Sieders — Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>Kurt & Darlene Sieders — Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>Lynda & Dave Hartman — Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>And also of:</p> <p>Mary & Andy Van Dyk — Vineland, Ont.</p> <p>Ralph & Heather De Witt — Stratford, Ont.</p> <p>Dear Oma and Grandma of 31 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Sister-in-law of Fred Masselink of Brampton, Ont., and Bill and Riek Sieders of Fort Frances, Ont. Also survived by her sisters Miep Bossema, Katie Kadijk, Adri van Noord and their families, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews in Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands.</p> <p>Funeral was held on Friday, June 21, 1996, at the Ebenezer Canadian Ref. Church in Burlington, Ont., with Rev. G. Nederveen officiating. Interment Greenwood Cemetery.</p> <p>Correspondence address: 3124 Clairmont Court, Burlington, ON L7N 2J4</p>	<p>Kerkdiensten op cassette in de Nederlandse taal</p> <p>U kunt zich nu abonneren op deze prekdienst, b.v.:</p> <p>a) een cassette iedere week; b) twee cassettes maandelijks; c) een cassette maandelijks.</p> <p>Prijs \$3,50 per cassette (plus \$1,50 als u de cassette wilt houden)</p> <p>Voor inlichtingen schrijf naar: Jack & Lenie Brouwer 27 Alpaca Drive Scarborough, ON M1J 2Z8 of bel: (416) 289-0706</p> <p>Luister naar het programma Zingend Geloven</p> <p>Toronto: CHIN FM 101 Elke Zaterdag 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Belleville: CJLX-FM 92.3 FM Zondag 7:00 p.m.</p> <p>Kingston: CFRC-FM 101.9 FM Zondag 12:00 middag</p>	<p>Administrative Assistant Position</p> <p>The Institute for Christian Studies is currently seeking an administrative assistant to facilitate the day to day running of the academic office. Tasks include: some secretarial duties for 12 faculty; assisting up to 50 students of various Christian and cultural backgrounds; committee work; some events planning; and academic recordkeeping.</p> <p>The suitable candidate for this job will have excellent organizing skills, good interpersonal skills, the ability to work in a busy office setting, and word processing skills. Some experience in an academic environment will be helpful. Knowledge of and an appreciation for the Christian character of ICS is an asset.</p> <p>Resumes must be submitted by July 12; the position begins July 29.</p> <p>Address applications to: John Meiboom, Vice President of Administration Institute for Christian Studies, 229 College Street Toronto, ON M5T 1R4 FAX: (416) 979-2332; Phone (416) 979-2331.</p>
<p>Obituaries</p> <p>Jan. 21, 1919 - June 20, 1996</p> <p>"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him" (Romans 8:28).</p> <p>At the Lord's appointed time our brother and brother-in-law</p> <p>GEERT DOLFING</p> <p>went to be with His Lord.</p> <p>He will be sadly missed by all of us.</p> <p>Grietje Slikers (nee Dolfing) — Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont.</p> <p>Klaas & Wilhelmina Hessels (nee Dolfing) — St. Catharines, Ont.</p> <p>Jan Dolfing — New Zealand</p> <p>Correspondence address: Mrs. J. Dolfing, Kanaal 72, 7902 LN Hoogeveen (Dr.), the Netherlands.</p> <p>With deep sorrow Family Outreach of Ontario expresses the loss of one of our volunteers</p> <p>SHARON NIENHUIS</p> <p>We extend our condolences to husband Jack, her two daughters, sons-in-law and her grandchildren.</p> <p>Sharon was deeply involved as a F.O.T. member in helping persons and families with alcohol problems. She was a firm believer that in all things "God is always in charge."</p>	<p>Church News</p> <p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>New clerk: — First CRC, Drayton, Ont.: Rudy Biel, (519) 638-3147 (address the same as the church).</p> <p>Job Opportunities</p> <p>Pork and cash crop farm located in Southwestern Ontario, is interested in employing a hired man for swine operation. Housing will be supplied. Close to Chr. Ref. Church. Applicant should be married. Experience preferred but not necessary.</p> <p>Phone (519) 683-6068</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<div> </div> <p>IT'S YOUR ENVIRONMENT... TAKE CARE OF IT.</p> <div> </div> <p>ORGAN DONATION GAVE MICHELLE A SECOND CHANCE.</p> <p>Until a few months ago, kidney dialysis was her only chance. But then a kidney donor was found. Discuss organ donation with your family and sign a donor card today. If enough people do, we can give others like Michelle a second chance.</p> <div> </div> <p>THE KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CANADA</p>

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Miscellaneous	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous
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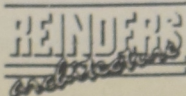
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Events

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- See what God has done through you, and what he's doing in the world through your denomination!

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Friday, October 25
Arie Crown Theatre,
McCormick Place

NW Washington /
Southern B.C.
Sunday, October 27
Lynden Public
High School

Northern Alberta
Wednesday,
October 30
Northern Alberta
Jubilee Auditorium

Southern Ontario
Saturday, November 2
Redeemer College
Auditorium

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November 6
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Miscellaneous

COMMUNIQUE



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Classifieds/Events

Events	Events	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous
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Rev. Bruce Woods
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Phone: (905) 648-1589

Miscellaneous

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Rev. Bastiaan Nederlof wrote that Rev. Van Andel's "meditations in *Calvinist Contact* were an expression of both his love for the Scriptures and his desire to convey true spirituality to the readers."

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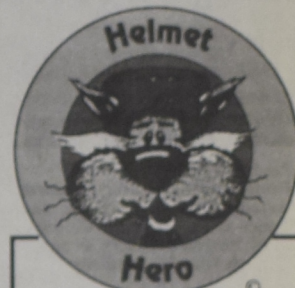
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NC

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

July 8-26 "Summer School," sponsored by Wycliffe College and ICS. Theme: "...bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:10) At ICS, Toronto, Ont. Info: Chris Barrigar (416) 979-2870 or fax (416) 979-0471 (#).

July 10 "Hollandse Dag," 9:30 a.m., Caradoc Community Centre, Mount Brydges, Ont. (#)

July 14 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Kuntz, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

July 17 An evening of entertainment with former wrestler, Jake ("The Snake") Roberts. "His thrilling testimony is something you don't want to miss." At 7 p.m., Kennedy Road Tabernacle, 141 Kennedy Rd., Brampton, Ont. Info.: Bill Morgan at (905) 677-1846. Freewill offering.

July 18 ICS/Wycliffe-sponsored public lecture by Dr. Terence Donaldson (U. of Sask.) on "Why Evangelize the Gentiles?" - The Origins of Paul's Gentile Mission." Respondent: ICS's Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat. At 7:30 p.m., Church of the Redeemer, corner Avenue Rd. & Bloor St., Toronto, Ont. Info.: (416) 979-2870.

Aug. 15 Guelph Ligonier Seminar, 2-10 p.m., Parkview Pentecostal Church, 89 Speedvale Ave. E., Guelph, Ont. Theme: "The Holy Spirit and Revival." Speakers: Drs. Jonathan Gerstner, Michael Haykin and Neal Hegeman. Admission: \$20. Info.: 1-800-563-3529.

Aug. 17 Toronto Ligonier Seminar, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Trinity Presb. Church, corner Bayview & Hwy. 401, Toronto, Ont. Theme: "Holy Spirit and the Transformation of the Christian." Speakers: Drs. Mariano Di Gangi and Donald Carson. Admission \$20. Info.: 1-800-563-3529.

Aug. 25 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Henry R. De Bolster, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

News

Hard-line labor unions face lock-outs, labor lawyer tells CLAC stewards

Gertie Pool

WHISTLER, B.C. — Adapting to numerous technological changes in the workplace will be a major challenge to management, unions and employees alike," said labor relations lawyer Tim Charron at the CLAC 1996 stewards conference held in Whistler last week.

Fifty of 20 CLAC stewards in Western Canada attended the Whistler training seminar.

The main speaker, local labor relations lawyer Tim Charron, spoke on the "Prospects of Change" in the province of British Columbia. Charron focused his attention on election results, shifts in the economy, new directions in business and changes in legislation.

Charron told his listeners that future trends in the workplace will swing towards globalization. "We will see more and more collective resistance where mega-companies, like food chains, will join together locking out workers in favor of yielding to the often unrealistic contract demands to employers by hard line labor unions. Look at what happened with Safeway, Overwaitea and Save-On-Foods in B.C. We will see many more such tactics happening in the years to come.... The difference between the CLAC and traditional unions lies in the CLAC's co-operative day to day relationships between management and their employees."

"Mainline unions are beginning to see the need for change in attitude, but there's a long way to go yet."

Union reps Frank Kooger and Kevin Jeske presented various aspects of grievance procedures. Kooger pointed out the stewards' legal obligations. He explained pitfalls for abuse and the proper use of a grievance procedure. "Stewards need to try to gauge problems and discern legitimate concerns. It is your duty to give fair representation, but never set yourself up as a judge, jury and prosecutor."

Cautioning listeners not to get into power struggles, but to be mindful that both stewards and employees must be of service to their employers under reasonable circumstances, both speakers reiterated that stewards need to understand how to use the steps of a grievance procedure if a single, group or policy grievance needs to be made.



(From l. to r.) Frank Kooger, Kevin Jeske and Maynard Witvoet are CLAC representatives in B.C.

The consensus was that the key to being a good steward is benefiting others and employing sensitive communication with management and workers in

order to encourage harmonious working conditions to the glory of God.

In closing remarks Maynard Witvoet, conference co-or-

ordinator and chair, said, "In a society where many people are hurting and in despair, we are convinced that as a union we can make a difference."

Fight not over for independent schools in Ontario

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — Independent schools have a story to tell about higher student achievement, lower costs and lower teacher salaries than are found in public schools, Sue-Ann Levy, education reporter for the *Toronto Sun*, told the recent annual meeting of the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools (OFIS).

In her writing, Levy is tough on school boards and bureaucrats in both the public and separate school systems, especially on waste and over-spending. She urged independent school people to be vigorous in lobbying politicians and pursuing court battles for justice in education. The *Toronto Sun*'s editorial policy is to support Ontario's having a single school system, she said, with an equal playing field for public, separate and independent schools.

OFIS executive director Ron Gray told how the federation has been present during the past year in meetings with John Snobelen, Ontario's Minister of Education and Training, and with members of his staff. The government is prepared to examine the inclusion of independent schools in Ontario's



Sue-Ann Levy encourages independent schools to promote their cause via the mass media.

educational system, Gray reported.

Bad climate for change

But OFIS and other supporters of independent schools think that the current climate in the Ontario legislature is not conducive to legislation that will help independent schools. As a result they are working on court cases to require recognition and funding for their schools. OFIS has invested \$100,000 in a case that was recently heard in the Supreme Court. The court was asked to find that the consti-

tution's statements on non-discrimination require that all schools that meet acceptable standards be equally recognized and funded.

Elaine Hopkins, chair of the OFIS board, reports that their case had a very good hearing before the Supreme Court, and a decision is expected before the end of this year.

Since 1974 OFIS has pressed for a comprehensive legal and public policy framework for recognizing independent, public and separate schools and home schools in Ontario. The federation is calling for full public funding on a voluntary basis; that is, that any independent school that wishes can decline public funding.

OFIS is struggling to maintain the momentum it gathered in 1974 when it was called the Ontario Association of Alternative and Independent Schools (OASIS), which was served by Lyle McBurney as its full-time executive director for two decades. A few years ago OFIS was reorganized and lost the support of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools and of the Canadian Jewish Congress. Its current annual budget is only \$18,000.

News Digest

Ireland still tough on divorce

DUBLIN, Ireland (EP) — A close national vote which legalized divorce when a marriage has "irretrievably" broken down and the partners have been separated for at least four years has been upheld by the Irish Supreme Court. The government now plans to introduce legislation during the summer to make divorce available. The Catholic Church, which includes 90 per cent of Ireland's population, says it will not recognize remarriages of divorced Catholics.

Germany wants middle ground on abortion

BONN, Germany (EP) — Germany's parliament has urged Bavaria to scrap a bill requiring women who seek an abortion to explain why. Germany wants a middle ground between the restrictive approach of the former West Germany and the abortion-on-demand of the former East Germany. Abortion is now permitted in the first three months of pregnancy, after a woman has received counselling. The proposed Bavarian bill would require the woman to tell the counselor why she wants to end her pregnancy.

Missionary boys go bad

JOHANNESBURG, S. Afr. (EP) — Two South African brothers who brutally killed an elderly Dutch missionary have received life sentences. Riku and Jano Nortje beat 76-year-old Engel Bakker to death with a baseball bat, cut up his body, stuffed it into suitcases and boarded a train to the country, where they planned to dump the body. When a suitcase began leaking blood they threw it from the train. That led to their eventual arrest.

It was then discovered that the Nortjes knew Bakker. They had been part of a missionary family whose parents had served with Bakker. And the brothers were living in Bakker's apartment when they killed him. They wanted to collect his pension and stay in his apartment, which he had asked them to leave.